

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 10528 301504Z
ACTION EB-08

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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

GENEVA PASS LOS DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLOS SENV EWWT ENRG FR UK XG XT
SUBJECT: AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL - NEW FRENCH NAVIGATIONAL
REGULATIONS

REF: A) STATE 079984 B) STATE 081064

1. QUAI D'ORSAY (LACOMBRE, SHIPPING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS DESK OFFICER, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS) BRIEFED EMBASSY TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER ON MARCH 28 RE NEW FRENCH NAVIGATIONAL REGULATIONS, WHICH WERE HURRIEDLY APPROVED AT LAST WEEK'S GOF CABINET MEETING AND WHICH WENT INTO FORCE MARCH 29. PRESENTATION ADDED NO TECHNICAL INFORMATION BEYOND THAT CONTAINED DMAHC 271943 Z MARCH. ESSENTIALLY, NEW REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO FORCE UNILATERALLY, AND THEY BAN TANKERS FROM SAILING CLOSER THAN SEVEN NAUTICAL MILES FROM BRITTANY'S WESTERN TIP. THEY ALSO REQUIRE TANKERS IMMEDIATELY TO REPORT THEIR POSITION,

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DIRECTION, AND ANY OPERATING PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITHIN 50 NAUTICAL MILES OF FRANCE.

2. HOWEVER, LACOMBRE DID ADVISE THAT GOF WILL SHORTLY TAKE INITIATIVE IN IMCO TO HAVE ENGLISH CHANNEL NAVIGATION LANES MOVED FURTHER AWAY FROM THE FRENCH COAST. HE STATED THAT PRESENT LOCATION OF THE LANES

CLOSE TO THE FRENCH SIDE OF THE CHANNEL WAS CHOSEN IN RESPONSE TO SHIPPING INTERESTS WHICH WANTED THE SHORTEST ROUTE BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC AND THE NORTH SEA. FRANCE, AT THE TIME, HAD NO OBJECTION BUT IN THE LIGHT OF THE AMOCO CADIZ DISASTER, IT CAN NO LONGER ACCEPT THIS LOCATION AND WILL SEEK IMCO AGREEMENT TO MOVE THE SYSTEM OF LANES FURTHER AWAY FROM ITS COAST AND TO THE CENTER OF THE CHANNEL.

3. WE HAD SEPARATE CONVERSATION IN BREST MARCH 25 WITH A UK COAST GUARD OFFICER, WHO HAD ATTENDED THE MARCH 24 MEETING BETWEEN GOF INTERIOR MINISTRY STATE SECRETARY BECAM AND UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT DAVIS. SOURCE REPORTED THAT FRENCH SIDE HAD SOUGHT UKG DECLARATION OF APPROVAL OF NEW FRENCH REGULATIONS. BRITISH RESPONSE, HE SAID, WAS TO EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL SITUATION NECESSITATING FRENCH QUOTE EMERGENCY MEASURES UNQUOTE, BUT TO INSIST THAT, PRIOR TO ANY FORMAL POSITION TAKING, UKG WOULD WANT FURTHER BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH FRENCH AND A FULL PRESENTATION TO IMCO. UK SIDE SAID IT HOPED A COORDINATED FRANCO/BRITISH POSITION MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

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Message Attributes

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